

Washington, D.C. Yesterday, as Georgia's Department of Community Health announced that it would stop accepting PeachCare enrollees on March 11, Congressman Sanford Bishop again requested House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and the Democratic leadership to intensify ongoing efforts to include additional funding for the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), which funds PeachCare, in the FY07 Supplemental Appropriations bill.

"In Georgia, our version of SCHIP – PeachCare – currently serves approximately 273,000 children from low- and middle income families; however it is facing a deficit of \$131 million," said the Congressman. "Without federal support, our state's program will be forced to close altogether. It would be unconscionable to allow these children and families lose access to such a vital program."

Last month, Congressman Bishop, along with a bi-partisan delegation from Georgia, held a meeting with a group of Congressmen and staffers from several key offices within the House of Representatives responsible for the fate of PeachCare and the other SCHIP programs. At the meeting, representatives from several Congressional offices including House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's office, the office of the Majority Whip, the House Budget Committee, House Committee on Energy and Commerce and the House Appropriations Committee discussed the possible ways to solve the current funding shortfall.

Since that time, House Speaker Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid both urged President Bush to submit emergency supplemental appropriations to save SCHIP. The President failed to act on that request, which forced the states to appeal to Congress.

The FY Supplemental Appropriations bill will be considered by the House next month.